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SUBJECT: UNASUR STRUCTURE AND CARTAGENA MEETINGS UNCERTAIN

REF: A. 07 QUITO 1047
[1](#)B. 07 CARACAS 781

Classified By: DCM Jefferson Brown for Reasons 1.4 (b&d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) are planning meetings of their delegates, foreign ministers and heads of state in Cartagena on January 26-28, but as of January 14 no countries had confirmed attendance. The purpose of these meetings is to approve a draft statute of the Union, which will be difficult due to a lack of consensus among member states. The Ecuadorian government urged that the Secretariat General be given a more responsible role. It also proposed that UNASUR take over Mercosur and CAN responsibilities. If differences are not soon resolved, the Cartagena meetings could be postponed. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Maria Isabel Salvador sent a letter on December 26, 2007, requesting that the members of UNASUR revise the draft of the founding statute of the Union, scheduled to be approved January 28 in Cartagena, Colombia. The Foreign Minister stated in a January 11 interview that the Ecuadorians "believe the statute is not completely ready and hope (their) proposals will be considered." During the last UNASUR summit in April 2007 in Margarita, Venezuela, the heads of state tasked the council of delegates to draft the statute (Ref B). The council of delegates is planning to meet on January 26 in Cartagena, followed by a meeting of the UNASUR foreign ministers on January 27 and a summit of heads of state on January 28 to approve the draft statute. However, Colombian DCM Hector Arenas Neira told PolChief on January 14 that to date there had been no confirmations of attendance for the ministerial or the summit.

[1](#)3. (C) The draft statute clearly has no consensus behind it. According to Brazilian Political Counselor Luis Claudio Villafane, the Ecuadorian letter requested two changes to the statute. The first of the proposals is that the Executive Secretariat be given a more important role, reporting

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directly to the heads of state rather than the council of delegates, which would give it greater responsibility for presenting initiatives. Secondly, the GOE would like to see UNASUR gradually assume the functions of Mercosur and the Community of Andean Nations (CAN). The Colombian DCM and Brazilian Political Counselor both warned that the ministerial and summit may be canceled if no prior consensus is reached on the statute.

¶4. (C) MFA Under Secretary of Multilateral Affairs Emilio Izquierdo confirmed to PolChief that the GOE wants a more important level of responsibility, specifically "an executive function," for Rodrigo Borja. A former president of Ecuador, Borja was designated in April 2007 as the Executive Secretary of UNASUR. President Correa apparently feels a political debt to Borja because Borja supported an unsuccessful attempt to unify his Democratic Left party with the President's Proud and Sovereign Fatherland movement (PAIS). Borja has reiterated that he stands ready to leave the position if these differences in the statute of UNASUR are not reconciled. On January 9, Borja stated publicly that his continued participation as Executive Secretary of UNASUR "depends on what UNASUR finally ends up being," if it "remains as a new institution of integration," and will make this decision "once its objectives and scope have been determined."

¶5. (SBU) The current draft statute establishes Quito as the location for UNASUR headquarters. The Brazilian DCM described the provisional structure of UNASUR as modeled after Mercosur, with three tiers. The presidents of member nations will have an annual meeting; the foreign ministers will meet every six months to formulate concrete proposals of action; and the council of delegates, composed of Under Secretary or Ambassador rank delegates, will meet on a more

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regular basis to draft proposals for consideration at the ministerial level.

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